



MY BROTHER'S KEEPER

A Christian ministry of loving service and education

Along The Way

September 2015

Our Mission To Bring the Love and Hope of Jesus Christ to those we serve.

We deliver furniture, food, and Christmas assistance free of charge to local families in need. We have no prerequisites for service.

"We're just the delivery people. This is the man who sent you the furniture."

Sacred Moments

By Erich Miller, President

The Providence College Campus Ministry staff recently came to My Brother's Keeper for an afternoon of service. We split into two crews and Fr. James Cuddy, Fr. Peter Martyr Yungwirth, Kelly Hughes, and PC summer interns, Maodo Lo and Shannon Grady, joined Dave O'Connor and me on some furniture deliveries.

Our first stop was to Lisa and her foster daughter, Caitlyn. Lisa met us outside and was very open about her struggles. She pulled up the bottom of her t-shirt and showed us a huge scar across her stomach. Major surgery had saved her life but left her disabled and in need.

Lisa and Caitlyn had little in their apartment—two air mattresses, a TV, a coffee table and a pet turtle. We brought them new beds, beautiful dressers, a recliner sofa and a kitchen set as well as dishes, linens, and pots & pans. They loved the furniture but they were especially grateful to have two priests in their apartment. "Will you please bless our home before you go?" Lisa asked. "It would be our pleasure," replied the good fathers.

When everything had been carried in and set in place, Dave brought us all together in the living room and offered our final gift, the crucifix. "Lisa and Caitlyn," he said. "We're just the delivery people. This is the man who sent you the furniture." Lisa gratefully accepted the cross and showed us where she would hang it so it could always be seen.

Fr. Cuddy then invited us all to join hands, he blessed the apartment and all who entered into it and we said the Our Father together. It was a beautiful, sacred moment.

With smiles on our faces and joy in our hearts, we moved on to our next stop just a few blocks away. We had the privilege of helping a single dad, Carlos, and his 12 year old daughter, Angel, who moved here from Puerto Rico. They'd been in their apartment for a month with nothing but two blow-up mattresses.

Angel wasn't there but Carlos' mom, Elizangela, was. It must have broken her heart to watch her son and granddaughter go without for so long. Carlos marveled at the quality of the furniture but it was Elizangela who couldn't help but 'ooh!' and 'aah!' every time we brought something in. In a very short time, the empty apartment was transformed into a beautiful home.

This time, Fr. Peter Martyr offered the crucifix and our message. Carlos gratefully accepted yet it was Elizangela who seemed most touched, even though none of the furniture was for her. When she saw Jesus, she brought her hands to her face, made the sign of the cross, and tears of joy followed. As you might imagine, we gave her a crucifix too. Another sacred moment.

We carried plenty of furniture that day but it was clear we delivered something much more important: the Love and Hope of Jesus Christ.

As gratifying as these deliveries were, we have little time as a ministry to be satisfied with our work. While we were helping these two families, three people stopped us on the street to ask for help and our card. The need is just so great!



The Campus Ministry staff of Providence College pictured with the My Brother's Keeper-Dartmouth staff.



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Summer...

Our (2nd) Busiest Time of the Year!



Years ago, summers were quiet at My Brother's Keeper as volunteers went to the Cape and spent extra time with family.

How things have changed!!!

Today, summer is without a doubt one of our busiest times of the year, second only to Christmas. Here's a little of what happened at My Brother's Keeper this summer:

- We completed 1,400 deliveries serving 5,300 children and parents in Christ's name.
- We hosted not one, not two, but three events—our 6th Annual Family Walk, our 9th Annual Golf Tourney and a Mass & Brunch in Dartmouth, our first-ever event on the South Coast. Collectively, they brought 1,200 supporters together to celebrate the work of My Brother's Keeper and raised \$370,000 (see back page).
- We hosted 300 student volunteers from 60 schools in our work along with 4 college summer interns and two seminarians from the Congregation of Holy Cross. Together, these students volunteered more than 4,000 hours.
- We picked up 300 twin mattresses from local colleges and 80 dressers from a hotel in Portland, Maine in addition to making 675 residential furniture pick-ups.
- We hosted more than 35 group volunteer experiences in partnership with area schools, churches, and businesses including a group from Beijing!



New Staff - Welcome Aboard!

It takes special people to accomplish our mission "To bring the Love and Hope of Jesus Christ to those we serve." We are grateful to these new staff members who have said "yes" to God and My Brother's Keeper. Ben and Andrew have been hired as full-time employees. Giuliana and Taylor are both participating in one-year post-graduate volunteer programs.



Ben Williams began volunteering in 2009 while attending Coyle & Cassidy High School and continued serving with us during his four years at Providence College. He was the first summer intern at our Dartmouth facility in 2014 and joined our staff in July after graduating with degrees in Theatre and History. As a Direct Service Staffperson in Dartmouth, Ben supervises volunteers on furniture pickups and deliveries. He lives in Bridgewater.



Giuliana La Piana joined our Easton staff as a full-time volunteer for one year through a program called Stonehill Service Corps (SSC). As part of SSC, Giuliana will live in Brockton with three other recent college grads who will each serve at a local charity. Giuliana is from Wurtsboro, New York and graduated in May with a degree in Theology from King's College in Pennsylvania. Her work at My Brother's Keeper will primarily focus on direct service and supervising volunteers.



Andrew Staiti is from Canton, MA and graduated from Stonehill College in 2014 with a degree in Communications. He volunteered at My Brother's Keeper regularly while he was a student, primarily helping with food deliveries. Andrew recently completed a year of service through the Franciscan Volunteer Ministry working at an after-school program in Camden, New Jersey. He will be a Direct Service Staffperson like Ben but will work at our Easton facility.



Taylor McLean joined our Easton staff for one year as a part-time volunteer through the Young Adult Volunteer Program (YAV) sponsored by the Presbyterian Church. The Boston YAV program focuses specifically on food justice issues so Taylor will serve with our Food Assistance Program. She will split her work week between My Brother's Keeper and Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church in Easton, acting as a bridge between our communities. Taylor lives in Watertown with two other YAV volunteers. She graduated from Elon College in 2015 with a degree in Religious Studies and is from Newport News, Virginia.

You don't have to be at My Brother's Keeper to be your brother's keeper.

The letter arrived out of the blue this summer along with a generous donation. We are blessed to have great people on staff who live out our mission in their personal lives, not just Monday through Friday. It's simply who they are.

Dear My Brother's Keeper:

Please accept this donation in honor of your staff member, Dave O'Connor.

We had the pleasure of meeting Dave while we were vacationing in Maine a few weeks ago. During Sunday morning Mass in a small church without air conditioning, our thirteen year-old daughter felt light-headed and came very close to passing out. Dave happened to be seated nearby, noticed something was wrong, and jumped into action. He sprinted next door to the town fire station and alerted the EMTs to come help someone at church. He then continued running a few blocks further, purchased a muffin and a cold juice, and brought it back to us at church, just as my husband and I were trying to figure out where we might quickly get a much needed beverage for our daughter. Thankfully, our daughter did not require the services of the EMTs and recovered after consuming the nourishment that Dave provided.

We are very grateful for Dave's selfless actions that morning and will remember him fondly for a long time to come. You are blessed to have Dave on your staff, as he personifies your mission of "bringing the Love and Hope of Jesus Christ" to others.

Sincerely,

Nancy

Nancy
Nashua, NH



Nice Job, Dave!

A Food Delivery Thank You

Our Easton facility makes 3,800 emergency food deliveries each year bringing more than \$500,000 worth of groceries to 16,500 children and adults in need. These numbers are impressive but they don't tell the story of how our Food Assistance Program touches lives and accomplishes our mission. Marilyn's beautiful email below does.

To: info@mybrotherskeeper.org
From: Marilyn*****<email.marilyn*****@gmail.com>
Date: July31,2015at10:27:11AMEDT
Subject: Thank you, so very much.

I received my first food delivery yesterday. I am disabled, so it is difficult for me to get out to other area food pantries, and the selection I have found is just not very good—dollar store items, day-old (expired) bread, produce that is turning, etc. I use a rolling walker, and I don't have a car, so getting there and back on the bus is a hassle plus carrying all the heavy items.

When I got my food delivery from you yesterday, I literally cried with joy. I am a single person, living on my own, and the sheer volume of food blew me away. Not just the volume, but the quality and the healthy choices of the selections. Super fresh produce and tons of it. A gallon of milk. A dozen eggs. Cheese, juice drinks, beans, rice, pasta, tomatoes, sauces. A loaf of freshly made bread and peanut butter and jelly and tuna. I could go on but the list is so extensive that I'd never remember to include it all. Things like fresh vegetables, corn on the cob, zucchini, squash, carrots, and even fresh peaches and cookies!

I am on Social Security Disability due to Multiple Sclerosis and I receive more than the cap for food stamps because I made too much money while I was working. The only reason I receive EBT for food at all is because I am disabled. It's not enough for a month's worth of food and certainly not a month's worth of food of this quality. I don't eat very well or very healthily, and I really need to, to stay healthy.

I have to tell you, when the three super friendly, amazingly helpful volunteers showed up with bags and bags of food plus paper goods, I was absolutely floored. I couldn't thank them enough and I can't thank you enough. I was absolutely speechless. You've made one big worry in my life disappear. I no longer have to spend my disability money on food, so I can pay my utility bills with it and possibly even save up some money to get a "beater" car, to have my own transportation, get some of my independence back, and not be dependent on buses and paratransit and friends and family for rides. This, too, will make my quality of life so much better.

Your organization has truly made a huge difference in my life, and I can't tell you how much it means to me that you have chosen to express your faith in Jesus by helping those of us who need your help. You are truly making a difference in the world, and I believe that is what Jesus preached and wants from people—to give to others in a way that makes their lives better.

There is so much talk in the media about how impoverished families don't have access to, or the money for, healthy choices, but there isn't really anyone doing anything to help change that. Your organization walks the walk and does the work to make it happen.

Please feel free to forward this email to anyone who you think should see it. I appreciate all the hard work that goes into what you do. Thank you again, you are all amazing.

Sincerely,
Marilyn
Brockton, MA

*"Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread"
Jesus hears your prayers
and He does not forget you.*



*Jesus said: "I was hungry and you fed me."
Matthew 25:35*

This flyer accompanies every food delivery to remind those we serve that the help truly comes from God.

My Brother's Keeper Food Delivery



Average
Retail Value = \$133

Our Cost = \$16

Cost to
Recipients = \$0

My Brother's Keeper is honored with the John S. Brayton Community Service Award



Fall River Area
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY, INC.

The Fall River Area Chamber of Commerce presented My Brother's Keeper with the John S. Brayton Jr. Community Service Award at a banquet held at White's of Westport on June 18th.

The award recognizes outstanding individuals and organizations who go above and beyond in contributing to the South Coast community and demonstrate excellence, creativity and initiative in their work.

Josh Smith, Director of our Dartmouth facility, accepted on behalf of My Brother's Keeper and said, "We are

deeply honored to receive such a prestigious award for our work serving residents of the Greater Fall River area, especially considering that our Dartmouth facility has been open less than 2 years."

Our work on the South Coast has exceeded all our expectations to date. We completed our 1,000th furniture delivery from the Dartmouth facility in April, nearly 12 months ahead of schedule; we have accepted referrals from 70 South Coast charities; and we have hosted more than 1,000 volunteers, including 650 students from 40 schools.



Volunteers and staff from our Dartmouth facility accept the John S. Brayton Community Service Award for our outstanding work on the South Coast.

No Longer a Prisoner

By Josh Smith, Director of Dartmouth Facility



It's been a great summer at the Dartmouth building. We hosted our first fundraiser, received a prestigious award from the Chamber of Commerce, and set a new single-month record for furniture deliveries with 76 families served in July. And during the last week of August, we welcomed 50 new student volunteers as part of freshman orientation week at area colleges.

What I remember most, though, is the wonderful people we met during deliveries...people like Ronnie from Fall River.

Fellow staff member Ben Williams and I were joined by Katie McMakin, a long-time Easton volunteer and an adjustment counselor at New Bedford's Renaissance Community School, along with a crew of current and former Bishop Stang students—Mary Carroll, Delilah Johnson, Allison Leary, and her brother Owen.

When Ronnie opened his door, he was surprised to see six of us crowded in his hallway. "Oh, I don't know if we can do this today," Ronnie said. "I have too much going on right now."

It wasn't until Ronnie invited me into his bedroom to talk that I realized the incredible stress he was under. He was babysitting his five-year-old grandson, his wife was

in the hospital and that was just the beginning.

Ronnie, his wife, his three adult children and his grandson had been homeless for the past two months. To keep a roof over their heads, the six of them squeezed into a single hotel room.

Ronnie worked as a taxi driver and paid for the room each day from his previous night's earnings. At one point, Ronnie worked 40 days in a row to keep his family off the streets. He was essentially a prisoner to his job.

While his nerves were frayed, he agreed they needed furniture and we could make the delivery. Ronnie calmed down instantly when he saw the first new bed come up the stairs. Our group carried in several beds, dressers, a kitchen table with chairs, linens, lamps, dishes, and a complete living room set. The couch was a particularly tight squeeze and when we got it in, Ronnie's grandson ran excitedly to sit on it first. The furniture was beautiful and it could not have matched the apartment more perfectly.

It was after admiring this new home that we presented Ronnie with the gift of a crucifix. "We were just the delivery people today," we told him. "This is the man that sent the furniture." With tears in his eyes, Ronnie thanked us and gave everyone an enormous hug. He clearly received Christ's love, hope and peace that day.



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Thank you to our 2015 sponsors who helped make these events the most successful yet!

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